

forward, asked a number of us to sign on to their bill and brought this bill forward. This bill, if it were introduced, would simply allow meals, lodging, travel by an officeholder and his or her staff, that was language that Senator Vard Johnson had added on Select File, when involved in activities related to the duties of his or her public office. What I think this does is it clarifies the gray area. Some of us thought that this was permissible under such terminology as...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...obtaining public input and opinion, which is a very nebulous term. Senator Johnson, the other day, did a good job of backdoor establishment of legislative intent, very creatively, Senator Johnson, of interpreting what that language meant but, in fact, that is a gray area. I think what this bill does is simply clarify what may in fact be common practice with some people anyway. I think it is a good bill. I don't think it opens up the statute for any mischief beyond what could conceivably be going on at the moment and I think it's a good bill and I would urge you to advance it.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Morehead.

SENATOR MOREHEAD: Mr. President and colleagues, I signed the motion with Senator Warner for the reason that he elected not to take as his opening statement, and I understand all the demographics behind that and the interaction between members here on the floor, but I don't think we gave that bill the right amount of time that it needed just for the very discussion that is going on here. There were other pending amendments to that bill. There were other areas that people wished to discuss and an effort to try to hustle it forward fast, people were asked to agree to this and agree to that and see if we couldn't work it out. Well, you know, here we are and not everybody has had their fair share, probably, of saying, and I know there are going to be a lot of people that probably aren't going to turn on their lights this afternoon and discuss this because they are looking at the clock again today and they are thinking about how many veto overrides are there and how many budget line item overrides we want to attempt and you're not going to give this very important public issue its due time. Yesterday we voted on a medical ethical issue. This is a political ethical issue and any time you start discussing the ethics of any issue, be it medicine or politics or law, it needs some serious thought